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TableBuilder: Labour Force Survey

Enables detailed analysis of the social and economic aspects of labour market engagement over time

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About the dataset

This release provides information about the TableBuilder product based on data from the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

In the latest release data is available from August 2006 to July 2024.

The monthly LFS provides information about the labour market activity of Australia's resident civilian population aged 15 years and over. The LFS is designed to provide estimates of employment and unemployment primarily for the whole of Australia and, secondarily, for each state and territory.

The LFS also provides detailed statistics on the labour force. This includes information on people who are:

- Employed, such as hours worked and underutilisation
- Unemployed, such as duration of job search and time since they last worked
- Not in the labour force, such as reasons they are not in the labour force and whether they are looking for work.

Socio-demographic information is also included.

Some information, including industry, occupation, job duration, and retrenchment, is only available in the mid-quarter months (i.e. February, May, August and November).

Accessing the data

The LFS provides monthly statistics about the labour market participation of the Australian population. Currently, LFS data are available in four formats:

- Headline estimates and summary results in the main publications: [Labour Force, Australia \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](https://web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release) and [Labour Force, Detailed, Australia \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release\)](https://web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release)
- Selected tables in [Data Explorer \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-explorer\)](https://web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/data-explorer)
- A longitudinal microdata product in [DataLab \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/\)](https://web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/)

[microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia](#))

- Produce your own custom tables in TableBuilder.

[Compare data services \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/about/data-services/compare-data-services\)](#) to see what's right for you or [apply for access \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder#how-to-access\)](#).

How TableBuilder fits in with other Labour Force Survey products

The [Labour Force, Australia \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#) and [Labour Force, Detailed, Australia \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia-detailed/latest-release\)](#) publications are the primary source of headline labour market estimates at national and state and territory levels.

The TableBuilder product allows you to customize and save your own tables using LFS data, and it provides the combined monthly and quarterly data together.

TableBuilder has small differences in aggregated estimates compared to the monthly publication. This has minimal impact on the underlying patterns of the data.

For more information, see our [Product Guide \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/wip-labour-force-survey-products-guide\)](#).

Applying for access

To apply for access to TableBuilder, register and apply in [Microdata Entry Page \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/log-your-accounts\)](#).

Further information on access steps can be found in [How to Apply for TableBuilder \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder#how-to-access\)](#) on the ABS website.

Support

General information about the LFS including methodology and other information can be accessed from the [Labour Force, Australia \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release\)](#) publication.

For further support in the use of this product, please contact [Microdata Access Strategies \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/about/contact-us\)](#) on 1300 135 070 or via microdata.access@abs.gov.au (<https://web.archive.org/web/20250318034117/mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au>).

Privacy

The [ABS Privacy Policy \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/about/legislation-and-policy/privacy/privacy-abs\)](#) outlines how the ABS handles any personal information that you provide to us.

Using TableBuilder

For general information relating to TableBuilder or instructions on how to use features of the TableBuilder product, please refer to the [TableBuilder \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder\)](#) information page.

Available data

The LFS TableBuilder product includes monthly information on:

- Labour force status - employed, unemployed, not in the labour force
- For people in the labour force - unemployment rate, underemployment rate, participation rate
- For employed people - status in employment, full-time or part-time status, hours actually worked, hours usually worked, duration of employment, expectations of future employment, underemployment, reason for working fewer hours than usual in the reference week
- For unemployed people - whether looked for full-time and/or part-time work, duration of job search, and whether active steps taken to find work
- For people not in the labour force - reason not in the labour force, whether looking for work
- Socio-demographic information - sex, age, social marital status, relationship in household, family type, participation in school and tertiary education, highest year of school completed, level of highest educational attainment, birthplace and year of arrival in Australia
- Geography/Region (of usual residence) - state or territory, capital city / balance of state, and labour force regions (Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4)). See [Regional labour market data guide \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/regional-labour-market-data-guide\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/regional-labour-market-data-guide).

Quarterly information is available on:

- For people in the labour force - retrenchments in the previous quarter
- For employed people - occupation, industry, and whether casual (i.e. employee without paid leave entitlements). See [Industry employment guide \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/industry-employment-guide\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/industry-employment-guide)
- For unemployed people - whether looked for full-time and/or part-time work, reason for ceasing last job, and industry and occupation of last job
- For people not in the labour force - retrenchments in the previous quarter.

For information on the concepts and data items collected in the LFS, see [Labour Force Survey Data item guide \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/wip-labour-force-survey-products-guide/labour-force-survey-data-item-guide\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/wip-labour-force-survey-products-guide/labour-force-survey-data-item-guide).

Data is available monthly from August 2006. Caution should be applied when comparing monthly data with quarterly data.

Data item list

LFS TableBuilder data item list - March 2025

[Download XLSX](#)
[607.22 KB]

Information on Methods

For general information on the methodology used in the Labour Force Survey, see [Labour Force, Australia methodology \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology).

The LFS TableBuilder is based on the [Longitudinal Labour Force \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/available-microdata-tablebuilder/longitudinal-labour-force-australia) microdata product which includes a sample of modelled records. This results in a slight difference in aggregated estimates for both TableBuilder and microdata datasets when compared to the main publications. In addition, the TableBuilder is subject to confidentiality restrictions before data is released. For more information on the modelled records see our [Product Guide \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/wip-labour-force-survey-products-guide#differences-in-lfs-estimates\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/understanding-statistics/guide-labour-statistics/wip-labour-force-survey-products-guide#differences-in-lfs-estimates).

Estimates and Sampling Errors

The estimates in the LFS are based on the sample of the population measured, rather than an attempt to measure the full population. As a result, estimates are subject to sampling variability.

Analysis undertaken on LFS estimates should incorporate appropriate quality measures which are available in the form of Relative Standard Errors (RSEs). The RSE is the expression of the standard error as a percentage of the estimate. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all dwellings had been included in the survey, and about nineteen chances in twenty that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

For further information on RSEs in TableBuilder see [Confidentiality and relative standard error \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder/confidentiality-and-relative-standard-error/\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/microdata-tablebuilder/tablebuilder/confidentiality-and-relative-standard-error/).

Weighting and Population Benchmarks

Individual survey responses are assigned weights to ensure they add to independent estimates of the civilian population aged 15 years and over, known as population benchmarks. The population benchmarks are revised quarterly, in mid-quarter months, to reflect the most recent Estimated Resident Population (ERP) data and these updates do cause minor revisions to the LFS estimates.

The TableBuilder product uses the [May 2024 population benchmarks \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/may-2024\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/labour-force-australia-methodology/may-2024) as this aligns with the latest time period included with this release, and may differ slightly to the data in the monthly publications.

For detailed information on methods used to gather the data for the Labour Force Survey, see [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods \(/web/20250318034117/https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/household-surveys/labour-force-survey/\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/labour-statistics-concepts-sources-and-methods/2023/methods-four-pillars-labour-statistics/household-surveys/labour-force-survey/).

Confidentiality features in TableBuilder

In accordance with the Census and Statistics Act 1905, all the data in TableBuilder are subjected to a confidentiality process before release. This confidentiality process is undertaken to avoid releasing information that may allow the identification of particular individuals, families, households, dwellings or businesses.

Processes used in TableBuilder to make records confidential include the following:

- perturbation of data
- table suppression.

Perturbation effects

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals in aggregate statistics, a technique is used to randomly adjust cell values. This technique is called perturbation. Perturbation involves small random adjustments of the statistics and is considered the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable statistics while maximising the range of information that can be released. These adjustments have a negligible impact on the underlying pattern of the statistics.

The introduction of these random adjustments result in tables not adding up. As a result, randomly adjusted individual cells will be consistent across tables, but the totals in any table will not be the sum of the individual cell values. The size of the difference between summed cells and the relevant total will generally be very small.

Please be aware that the effects of perturbing the data may result in components being larger than their totals. This includes determining proportions.

Table suppression

Some tables generated within TableBuilder may contain a substantial proportion of very low counts within cells (excluding cells that have counts of zero). When this occurs, all values within the table are suppressed in order to preserve confidentiality. The following error message below is displayed at the bottom of the table when table suppression has occurred:

ERROR: The table has been suppressed as it is too sparse

ERROR: table cell values have been suppressed